[CZ] Revised Czech Radio Act

IRIS 2002-6:1/16

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The Parliament of the Czech Republic has passed an amendment to the Czech Radio Act, based on the amendment to the Czech Television Act (see IRIS 2001-7: 8).

In terms of organisation, the Director General of Czech radio will continue to be elected by the members of the Czech Radio Council, which for its part will still be elected by the lower house of Parliament. According to the amendment, nominations for election to the Council may also be proposed by organisations and associations representing cultural, regional, social, religious, scientific or environmental interest groups, as well as trade unions, employers and national minorities. According to a new rotational system, one-third of the members will step down every two years. In principle, Council meetings are to be held in public and the minutes of those meetings published. A new committee will monitor how the funding and assets of Broadcasting Czech radio are used. Its members will be appointed by the Council, to which it will report any breaches it finds and will recommend the necessary sanctions.

The amended Act also lists the duties of public service radio. In this connection, the Director General will submit to Parliament a code of conduct for Czech radio, setting out the basic principles for the activities of public service radio. Council Failure to respect the provisions of the code may lead to the Prague dismissal of the Director General or of an employee.

After the second chamber of the Czech Parliament, the Senate, had referred the draft amendment back to the lower house with proposals for further amendments, the lower house re-adopted the text in its original version, whereupon the President of the Czech Republic exercised his veto against the proposal. In his opinion, the Act contained the same flaws as the amendment to the Czech Television Act (see IRIS 2001-3: 8). The main point of contention is the fact that the lower house of Parliament bears sole responsibility for electing the members of the Czech Radio Council and approving the code of conduct for Czech radio. The President believes that the Senate, as the second chamber of Parliament, should at least be involved in these decision-making processes so that decisions are taken independently of party political interests. However, the lower house of Parliament voted down the President's veto on 9 May 2002 and the amended Act entered into force on 22 May 2002.

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Act no. 193/2002: Collection of Acts and Decrees of the Czech Republic - amendment to the Czech Radio Act, entered into force on 22 May 2002

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